REMARKS

Claims 1-31 are pending in this application. Claims 32-63 have been cancelled. Claims 1-31 are rejected.

Responsive to the rejection of claims 1-31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious by International Patent No. WO 98/33974 (Kuhasalo et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,923,567 (Liedes et al.) or U.S. Patent No. 3,355,349 (Devlin) or U.S. Patent No. 4,997,524 (Nieminen et al.), Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and submit that claims 1-31 are now in condition for allowance.

Kuhasalo et al. '974 disclose a method and equipment in the forming of a lead-in strip A (Figs. 1A-1D) in a paper/board machine including two cutters C1, C2 of which at least one cutter C2, being is brought into connection with the web from outside the web, is a liquid cutter, preferably a water cutter (Abstract). An edge strip B is formed alongside lead-in strip A (Abstract).

Liedes et al. '567 disclose end conduction strip guiding element 10 (Figs. 1-3) in conjunction with a smooth-surfaced central roll 35 of a closed press section, on a lower sector thereof before doctor blade 39 (column 3, lines 61-65). From one side of web W, a narrow lead strip R is cut with a spray cross cutter (tail cutter/diagonal cutter) known in the art (column 5, lines 38-40). At first, a narrow lead strip R is cut, and when its run is stabilized, the spray cross cutter is traversed in the cross-direction of the web, and lead strip R is thus widened to be of full-width (column 5, lines 42-45). When the initial part 16R of plate 16 is formed to have a suitable, fairly large radius of curvature R0, the strip R is swiftly stabilized to be governed by effect of the transfer blow P2 and the guidance of the plate 16, and it is pulled taut so as to prevent bagging between the press roll 35 and end conduction strip guiding element 10 (column 6, lines 4-9).

Devlin '349 discloses an apparatus for conveying a lead strip from driers to calendars (Figs. 1-4) including endless belt-type conveyor 28 which extends between the drier and calendars to carry the lead strip therebetween (column 2, lines 39-42). The lead strip will pass over upper run 49 of the belt and the end portion of chest 48 adjacent pulley 30 and continue into waste (column 4, lines 5-7). Belt 29 is then placed in operation and roller 59 extended transversely thereacross (column 4, lines 7-9). The vacuum created in chest 48 results in the lead strip adhering to the moving belt so moving upwardly along the conveyor, and the portion of the lead strip now in the waste bin is automatically severed by cutter 78 (column 4, lines 10-14).

Nieminen et al. '524 disclose an apparatus for guiding and cutting off (Fig. 1) threading strip R including guiding plate elements 14a, 14b, which are supported by the frame structure at point 15a, 15b (column 2, lines 48-51). Guiding plate element 14 includes rows of nozzles 16, which blow in the length direction of element 14 (column 2, lines 51-53). Device 20 for cutting and guiding threading strip R is attached to guiding plate element 14 (column 2, lines 53-55). Device 20 includes first guiding plate 21, which is immediately followed by guiding plate element 14 (column 2, lines 55-57). Device 20 further includes cutting member 22, preferably a sharp saw blade 22, by way of which strip R is cut off (column 2, lines 57-60).

In contrast, claim 1 recites in part: "deflecting the edge strip to the side of and away from the transfer strip; and simultaneously tautening the edge strip during said deflecting step.".

Kuhasalo et al. '974, Liedes et al. '567, Devlin '349 or Nieminen et al. '524, or any of the other cited references, fail to disclose or suggest at least the step of simultaneously tautening the edge strip during the deflecting step as recited in independent claim 1. In order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, the prior art references must teach or suggest all the claim limitations (MPEP 2142) and the cited references fail to disclose or suggest at least the step of simultaneously tautening the edge strip during the deflecting step.

An advantage to the present invention is deflecting the edge strip to the side and away from the transfer strip and simultaneously tautening the edge strip.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claim 1, and claims 2-32 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance, which is hereby respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that no combination of the cited references teaches, discloses or suggests the subject matter of the amended claims. The pending claims are therefore in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of all rejections and allowance of the claims.

In the event Applicants have overlooked the need for an extension of time, an additional extension of time, payment of fee, or additional payment of fee, Applicants hereby conditionally petition therefor and authorizes that any charges be made to Deposit Account No. 20-0095, TAYLOR & AUST, P.C.

Should any question concerning any of the foregoing arise, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (219) 897-3400.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on: February 3, 2005.

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